

PHILOSOPHY 4

INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

Summer 2007

MTWR 11-12:05, Girv 2128

Instructor:

Jake Blair, Philosophy Dept. (Graduate Student)

Office: South Hall 5432T

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00-3:00, and by appointment

Email: jdblair@umail.ucsb.edu

Teaching Assistant:

Quentin Gee, Philosophy Dept. (Graduate Student)

Office: South Hall 5432P

Office Hours: Tuesdays/Wednesdays 12:30-1:30, and by appointment

Email: gee@umail.ucsb.edu

Course Description:

Phil 4 is a lower-division introduction to ethics. Ethics, broadly construed, is the philosophical examination of morality. In this class we will mainly concern ourselves with such questions as: What do we mean exactly when we say that something is good? What is it that makes an action right? Likewise, what makes an action wrong? What constitutes the Good life? What are the principles that I should live my life by? We will primarily examine what some of the major philosophical figures had to say regarding these questions, e.g. Plato (427-347 B.C.), Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), David Hume (1711-1776), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), and John-Stuart Mill (1806-1873). Towards the end of the class we will examine such contemporary ethical debates as abortion, euthanasia, environmental ethics, and stem-cell research.

Required Text:

Course Reader, available at GraphicArt, on Pardall Road, in Isla Vista

Course Goals and Objectives:

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Recognize, and explain (in your own words), the logical structure of the philosophical arguments under discussion,
2. Compare and contrast the various philosophical theories under discussion, and
3. Critically evaluate the strengths and weakness of these philosophical theories, i.e. be able to communicate (in your own words) *why* you think the claims made by the philosophers under discussion *are* or *are not justified*.

You will demonstrate that you have met these objectives by writing **two short papers** and taking **six, weekly in-class quizzes**. Regarding your papers, both of them should be clear, concise, and well argued (I will be giving you your paper topics later). Regarding your quizzes, each quiz will consist of one (maybe two) short essay (answer) questions that you will have to answer in an allotted amount of time. As the week progresses, I will be giving you a "heads up" on what you should be studying for the quiz.

Course Requirements:

- Two short papers (4-5 pages each) worth 25% and 35% of your course grade, respectively.
- Six, in-class quizzes totaling 40% of your grade (note: the first four quizzes will each be 5% of your grade. The last two quizzes will each be 10% of your grade). A quiz will be given at the end of each week, which will be on a Thursday.

Your TA will grade your papers and quizzes. If you think that you deserve a better grade than what you have been given, then you should discuss this with him. If after meeting with your TA you still feel unsatisfied with your grade, then I can take your paper and re-grade it. But, keep in mind that the grade I give you will be final, and it may be lower than your original grade.

If you turn in a late paper, for every day that your paper is late it will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade. Exceptions will only be made for those who have a legitimate excuse (e.g. you were in the hospital) and proper documentation (e.g. a doctor's note). **Note Well: Do not turn in a paper to the philosophy department office (where our mailboxes are). The office staff does not take kindly to that. You hand your paper in to your TA. Consult with your TA regarding the permissibility of emailed papers.**

There will be no make-up quizzes. Exceptions will only be made for those who have a legitimate excuse (e.g. you were in the hospital) and proper documentation (e.g. a doctor's note).

Attendance and participation in lecture and section are **strongly encouraged** but not required. I expect that you will come to every lecture and section ready to ask and answer questions about the material, but attendance will not be taken.

DSP:

DSP students will, of course, be accommodated. Let me know if you are a DSP student who requires assistance.

Writing Support:

I cannot stress enough that good writing skills are absolutely necessary for success in philosophy. You will not excel if you cannot write well. This is because doing the work of philosophy requires that you clearly communicate complex and abstract ideas. So, in addition to the help that your TA and I can provide, you should seek out the help of the writing tutors at Campus Learning Assistance Services.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism runs contrary to the purposes of the University and will in no way be tolerated. If you are caught plagiarizing or cheating in any way, you will receive an automatic F for the class and I will report you to the appropriate university authorities. It is your responsibility to ensure that your work is not plagiarized. If you have questions on this issue, consult the following website or see me or the TA. <http://hep.ucsb.edu/people/hnn/conduct/disq.html>

Tentative Course Outline:

(Note: Throughout the course I will be announcing to you what your reading assignments will be for each day.)

Week 1:

- Mon, Aug 6th: Introduction to the course; an overview of the nature and methodology of ethics.
- Tues, Aug 7th: Divine Command Theory
- Wed, Aug 8th: Divine Command Theory Continued; Cultural Relativism
- Thurs, Aug 9th: Weekly Wrap-up; **Quiz #1**
Read Aristotle (pp. TBA)

Week 2:

- Mon, Aug 13th: Virtue Ethics (Aristotle)
Read Aristotle (pp TBA)
- Tues, Aug 14th: Virtue Ethics (Aristotle) Continued
Read Aristotle (pp TBA)
- Wed, Aug 15th: Virtue Ethics (Aristotle) Continued
Read Aristotle (pp TBA)
- Thurs, Aug 16th: Weekly Wrap-up; **Quiz # 2**
Read Hume (pp. TBA)

Week 3:

- Mon, Aug 20th: Subjectivism (Hume)
Read Hume (pp. TBA)
- Tues, Aug 21st: Subjectivism (Hume) Continued
Read Kant (pp TBA)
- Wed, Aug 22nd: Deontology (Kant)
Read Kant (pp TBA)
- Thurs, Aug 23rd: Weekly Wrap-up; **Quiz # 3**

Week 4:

- Mon, Aug 27th: Deontology (Kant) Continued; **Paper #1 Due**
Read Kant (pp TBA)
- Tues, Aug 28th: Deontology (Kant) Continued; Utilitarianism
Read Mill (pp TBA)
- Wed, Aug 29th: Utilitarianism Continued
Read Mill (pp TBA)
- Thurs, Aug 30th: Weekly Wrap-up; **Quiz # 4**

Week 5:

- Mon, Sept 3rd: **Holiday**
- Tues, Sept 4th: Abortion (Thomson)
- Wed, Sept 5th: Abortion (Marquis)
- Thurs, Sept 6th: Weekly Wrap-up; **Quiz # 5**

Week 6:

- Mon, Sept 10th: Euthanasia (Brock and Callahan)
- Tues, Sept 11th: Euthanasia Continued; Stem-Cell Research
- Wed, Sept 12th: Environmental Ethics; Cloning
- Thurs, Sept 13th: Weekly Wrap-up; **Quiz #6; Paper # 2 Due**

NOTE: I reserve the right to amend the contents of this syllabus for any reason.